

"don't you wonder where I'm chasing
daffodils now?"

but nothing happened so I walked
off
followed by uncle
who said, "hey, Henry, let's
go get something to eat!"

"I know just the place," I said,
"follow
me"

I could almost hear him saying
from the casket:

"the way to a man's heart is
through his
stomach"

COUNSEL

I am living in hell, he told me, and I said, is that right,
Frankie? and he said, I am truly living in hell, you
would never believe it.
everything, he continued, has hardened into a repetitious
going-on toward nowhere.
is that right, Frankie? fucking-a, he said, you ever
been locked into a position where the only escape is
death?
yes, I told him.
then what do you do? he asked.
Frankie, I just wait, death is coming anyhow.
but, he told me, I can't wait.
Frankie, you'll wait.
why, he asked me, is pain the most present and constant
thing in life?
physical pain is hard to explain, Frankie, but I know what
causes most spiritual pain.
yeah? yeah? he asked.
most spiritual pain, my lad, is caused by
over-expectation.
yeah? yeah? he asked.
over-expectation, I said, try to avoid it.
do you? he asked.
yes, more and more I expect less and less,
and do you get less?
almost always, Frankie.
damn, he said, it always helps to talk to you, you've been
around the block.
I'm afraid so, Frankie.

he asked, did you ever think you would live this long?
Frankie, I haven't lived this long, I've lasted this
long, good
night.

I hung up the receiver and pulled the
bottle
toward me.

A FINAL WORD ON NO FINAL WORDS

near the end of the interview he leaned forward and
asked, "now is there any final word you'd like to give to
your audience?"

"no," I answered, "no final word."

I felt his disappointment.

"no final word?" he asked again.

"no," I said.

he had wanted a nice closer, he had wanted me to save
his ass,
he had wanted me to save the asses of my readers.
well, I had worked on saving my own ass but I felt that I
hadn't really done so

but just to come up with some ditty of a line
would have been
totally misleading ultra crap.

"well," he recovered himself and said to me, "it's been
a real pleasure to interview
you."

"sure, baby," I said.

then he motioned to the camera and the sound men that
it was over
and they began packing their
gear.

"you fellows care from a drink?" I asked.

"no thanks," the interviewer spoke for everybody, they were
pulling plugs from the walls, folding equipment into
cases, it were as if I no longer
existed.